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coldly scientific facts, a period of pronounced unfaith would almost certainly ensue. This does not deny the chance that the spiritualists may ultimately arrive, but in the meantime what of those who have pinned their faith to occultism?

The truth seems to be that the study of the occult is a science in its crude and early stages. Its professors should be unmolested, but those who are in haste to popularize what they believe themselves to have learned are not doing so great a service to humanity as they imagine. The reader attracted by this kind of reading may generally be assured that if he has examined a comprehensive work like Henry Holt's *Cosmic Relations* he will find little to satisfy his further curiosity in other works upon the supernatural.

MEMOIRS OF A CLUBMAN. By G. B. Burgin. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company.

The title of Mr. Burgin's book hardly does it justice, since for some reason or other it suggests a rather superficial view of the world. But active as the author has been in club life, his autobiography is really the story of an author's career. The two best qualities of the narrative are its humor and its ill-concealed spirit of helpfulness. Mr. Burgin, according to his own account, "drifted into writing", a profession which he (like many another man) has found to be both a source of interest and a questionable blessing. To read a little between the lines, Mr. Burgin, though he has been highly successful, has not the consolation of feeling that he is great. But many a young man will, in the course of human events, "drift into writing", and still more, both old and young have leanings that way. Of these few or none can aspire to greatness.

Born in Croydon, England, in 1856, Mr. Burgin early fell victim to the sentiment that leads young fellows to write. A dwarf, Jerry Oletenshaw, who was his boon companion in his 'teens, confirmed him in his literary bent. "Jerry consorted a great deal with the Gypsies on the Common, and, in some mysterious way born of suffering, had acquired an insight into the future. 'You will travel,' he said. 'You will travel into strange lands and meet with many things. Store them in your heart and write books.' At that time," Burgin adds, "it seemed to me the summit of human felicity to be able to write books. Sometimes the gods answer our prayers in order to punish us for having made them."

When eighteen, the author won a copy of Goldsmith's *Deserted Village* "in an alleged literary competition." His father, perceiving that the literary life had laid fast hold upon him, sent him out to Canada, in order that he might at least have something to write about before he attempted to write. This Canadian episode is an idyl, curiously real, remarkably affecting in its contrast with the atmosphere of the great world which pervades all other parts of the book. Mr. Burgin says just enough about his honest friends at Four Corners and his lost love, Sheila Campbell, to leave an unforgettable impression.

Every author, unless he be great enough to be a sort of monomaniac, must be many-sided. The literary emotions, the capacity for solitude and sentiment which is an almost inevitable concomitant of his talent, must be checked by stimulating human associations. A man must "look into his own heart and write", but he must also knock about a bit. Mr. Burgin did both. Returning from Canada, he became secretary to Valentine Baker Pasha, sojourned in Constantinople, and journeyed through Asia Minor. On a later visit to his old Canadian haunts, he spent some time in a Trappist monastery, obtaining there the impressions which he afterwards worked up into his novel *Shutters of Silence*.

The end of his Near Eastern experience found him without prospects or immediate means of livelihood, and he became that most miserable of beings, a London clerk. From this dead-alive existence he was rescued by Robert Barr. Burgin had written a story of Canadian life which he submitted in a competition instituted by *The Detroit Free Press*. He did not win the competition, but his story was found good enough to buy, and Barr sought him out. Meanwhile, through an old Canadian friend, the minister at Four Corners, he had made the acquaintance of Wyville Home, the song-writer, who introduced him to that lovable friend of struggling genius, F. W. Robinson, the editor of *Home Chimes*, and to the literary circle of the Old Vagabonds. Mr. Burgin now had an average favorable start in the world of letters and journalism. He had the good fortune to become secretary to Jerome K. Jerome and eventually sub-editor of *The Idler*, the editorial group of which was one of those rare fellowships of literary knights errant worthy to be commemorated in histories of literature. In time he deserted *The Idler* to become a reader for *Pearson's Magazine*, but as his literary reputation grew he gladly abandoned the drudgery of reading (mostly unavailable) manuscripts and turned to wholly independent work.

Fully a third of Mr. Burgin's book is devoted to comments upon the literary life, the experiences of the shop, the methods of well-known authors, and the trials of the young aspirant. His hints, and especially his attitude toward life and toward his profession, should be absorbed by every young person with literary leanings and especially by that majority of young writers who essay to enter literature through the journalistic door. In his advice there is nothing patronizing; it is simply the cheerful, moderately disillusionizing comment of a man who knows. He who reads this book understandingly will learn how to take himself seriously enough to do good work without becoming self-centered, and how to keep his necessary literary vanity in its place without becoming a futile self-censor.

A mellow humor, with a sharp tang of common sense, makes the book a sort of guide to worldly wisdom properly so-called, while the author's rare ability to make fun of himself while he criticizes others makes all his observations more telling. But most of all, the narrative is remarkable for its anecdotes about noteworthy people, great and small, and for the personal touch that alone makes anecdotes acceptable.